

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3316

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 24682

DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO

BEIRUT PASS USINT BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, IR

SUBJECT: POMPIDOU VISIT TO TEHRAN

1. EMBOFF SEPTEMBER 18 ASKED QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS ROUILLON FOR HIS READING OF POMPIDOU'S BRIEF STOPOVER IN TEHRAN EN ROUTE FROM PEKING. ROUILLON COMMENTED, AS HAD FRENCH PRESS, THAT VISIT WAS LARGELY CEREMONIAL AND DESIGNED TO CONFIRM RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES BEGUN EARLIER IN YEAR DURING ARMED FORCES MINISTER GALLEY'S VISIT TO TEHRAN. UNPLEASANTNESS OF PERSEPOLIS INCIDENT, WHEN POMPIDOU REFUSED TO ATTEND 2500TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS, NOW THING OF THE PAST.

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2. ROUILLON SAID HE ASSUMED POMPIDOU AND SHAH HAD REVIEWED

SITUATION IN AREA AND BILATERAL ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONS. PRINCIPAL POLITICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IRAN AND FRANCE, HE SAID, WAS OVER FRENCH POLICY IN IRAQ. IRANIANS FELT THAT FRENCH SUPPORT FOR IRAQ ENCOURAGED IT TO TAKE INTRANSIGENT POLICY TOWARDS IRAN. FRENCH, ON OTHER HAND, WERE ENDEAVORING TO ASSURE SHAH, AS THEY HAVE TRIED TO TELL THEIR WESTERN ALLIES, THAT THEIR POLICY IN FACT REINFORCED MODERATE AND WESTERN ELEMENTS IN IRAQI GOVERNMENT.

3. ON ECONOMIC FRONT, ROUILLON SAID RELATIONS HAD MOVED RELATIVELY SLOWLY AND FRENCH INVESTORS HAD CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY IN FINDING SUITABLE PLACES IN IRAN TO PUT THEIR MONEY. ROUILLON WAS SKEPTICAL ABOUT PRESS REPORTS FRANCE WOULD BUILD TEHRAN SUBWAY AND COMMENTED THAT IN HIS VIEW PROJECT WAS "SEA SERPENT WHICH WOULD NEVER LEAVE LOCH NESS." ROUILLON NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT ALTHOUGH ECONOMIC RELATIONS MIGHT BE DEVELOPING SLOWLY, ON CULTURAL FRONT FRENCH CONTINUED TO BE ACTIVE, PARTICULARLY WITH DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH-SPEAKING UNIVERSITY.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH ROUILLON MINIMIZED FRENCH ECONOMIC STAKE IN IRAN, FRENCH PRESS HAS PLAYED IT UP NOTING THAT FRENCH EXPORTS TO IRAN INCREASED 22 PER CENT IN 1972 OVER PREVIOUS YEAR, MAKING FRANCE FIFTH MOST IMPORTANT SUPPLIER OF IRAN. ACCORDING TO PARIS ECONOMIC DAILY, LES ECHOS, FRENCH HAVE ALSO CONCLUDED MATERIAL SUPPLY CONTRACTS AMOUNTING TO ALMOST 100 MILLION DOLLARS SINCE OCTOBER 1972. IN ANY EVENT, FRENCH INTEREST IN IRAN IS CLEARLY GROWING AS SHAH PLAYS MORE IMPORTANT ROLE IN GULF AFFAIRS. IT IS THEREFORE PROBABLE THAT HIGH LEVEL VISITS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES WILL CONTINUE AND THAT FRENCH WILL SEEK WAYS TO EXTEND MARKET FOR THEIR GOODS, BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY, IN REGION WHICH THEY REGARD AS INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT FOR THEIR INTERESTS. IRWIN

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

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